

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD) released the following statement after President Obama's speech on his strategy for Afghanistan:

“President Obama inherited two major challenges from the Bush Administration: an economy in steep decline and involvement in two wars in which the objectives set forth at their outset had not been attained.

“Tonight the President set forth a course of action to go forward in Afghanistan, a decision that was made necessary by the failure of the Bush Administration to complete successfully our mission in Afghanistan. The course the President has undertaken is designed to achieve the twin objectives of ensuring that a resurgent al Qaeda is precluded from again using Afghanistan as a staging area for an attack on the United States and creating the ability of the Afghan government and people to provide for their own security and defense.

“The plan presented is balanced. It provides the resources, in partnership with allied nations, that the military has said are needed to accomplish our objectives, while also making it clear to the Karzai government and the Afghan people that our commitment is not without limit. His statement made it clear that there is an expectation that Afghanistan must transition to a place of self-reliance in the near term. Such an expectation is appropriate and necessary.

“Pakistan's willingness to defend itself and continue effective action against al Qaeda and the Taliban in its country will be critical, as the President observed, to the success of our efforts in Afghanistan.

“I look forward to the testimony of both military and civilian leaders on the President's proposal, how to achieve the goals established, and the probability of success of the President's plan.”

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